

TOWN OF EGREMONT, MASSACHUSETTS  
MEETING OF THE SELECT BOARD  
MINUTES

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Date: August 11, 2020  
Time: 10:00am  
Place: Zoom Meeting  
Egremont

Present via zoom meeting were Chairman George McGurn, Vice-Chair Lucinda Fenn-Vermeulen, Board member Mary Brazie.

Others present: Juliette Haas, Mary McGurn, Abigail Rogers-McKee, Marj Wexler, Joan Goodkind, Eric Shamie, Kevin Zurrin and Eileen Vining.

MINUTES:

Minutes of the July 28, 2020 meeting were accepted unanimously in roll call as edited during the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

The Great Barrington Regional Transportation Advisory Committee has urged Egremont to delegate a representation to the Committee. After Chairman McGurn reported on his attendance at the first meeting, the Board agreed it was disinclined to participate. Chairman McGurn reported that an ad hoc group formed to deal with issues with Southern Berkshire Elderly Transportation would like to meet at French Park on August 19 at 1pm.

Vice-Chairwoman Vermeulen confirmed that the van being sought under a transportation grant in fact has space for 4 wheel chairs and 3 non-wheel chair riders.

The Board discussed the new sign at Town Hall after receiving an objection to the sign from a resident. Vice-Chairwoman Vermeulen agreed and feels it was purchased by mistake, that it is not aesthetically appropriate to the historic character of the town and that she was embarrassed by the sign. Marj Wexler said that everyone she had talked to hates it. Chairman McGurn disagreed and said the sign was useful and was an improvement over the black and white signs that the Town used throughout town. Selectwoman Brazie said that the sign was approved by a prior Board and the funds were placed in the FY 2020 budget to purchase the sign. Chairman McGurn said that the sign was talked about at the Town Meeting in which the funds were approved. The goal was to improve communications and it has done that. Mary McGurn said that the function of a sign is to be read and this sign can clearly be read while driving up or down the road. She suggested some form of landscaping to improve it's appearance. The Board agreed to take no action at this time.

The Board discussed the need for a Special Town Meeting as stated during the planning process for the annual meeting and at the Annual Town Meeting. One financial issue that needs to be acted on is the impending shortfall in the Transfer Station budget due to the increase in usage. Others issues would include a Marijuana Bylaw and the Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Bylaw. Town Clerk Juliette Haas urged the Board not to hold a special town meeting as her work load during election time would not allow her the time to do a town meeting and complete the necessary paperwork involved in reporting bylaw changes to the Commonwealth. The Board tentatively scheduled a Special Town Meeting for October 13 and hopes to hold it outside again at French Park. Vice-Chairwoman Vermeulen will speak with the Planning Board Chair to urge action be taken on the Marijuana and ADU Bylaws. Joan

Goodkind, Chair of the Housing Committee, said that the Committee would like to put forth the Community Preservation Act again in order to help fund affordable housing.

#### OLD BUSINESS:

Mr. Zurrin reported that he has had no contact with Town Counsel Jeremia Pollard regarding negotiations on an Host Community Agreement to cultivate marijuana.

In response to the complaint about the confederate flag on a residents grave at the Town House Hill Cemetery, Chairman McGurn reported that he spoke with Town Counsel who said this is a slipper slope that might lead to unintended consequences. The Cemetery Commissioners met at the Town House Hill Cemetery on Friday, August 5 and have voted to seek advice from Town Counsel before considering any action. Selectwoman Brazie noted that at issue is the fact that the grave lots are sold with deeds so do they remain town property or are they now private property. Maintenance is done by the town but is paid for by the fees from the sale of lots. Vice-Chairwoman Vermeulen noted that she is no longer as rigid as she was on the subject after hearing the advice from Town Counsel.

#### COVID-19:

The Southern Berkshire Regional School District is announcing and discussing its re-opening plan on Thursday, August 13. The issue is very complex. Also of concern is funding issues in particular to transportation as Chapter 70 aid was level funded.

The Board will amend the signs at French Park lowering the gathering limit under the Pavilion to 25.

Selectwoman Brazie asked for the Board's guidance at the horse ring as there is a small horse show scheduled for August 23. Generally there are no more than 12 participants. It is estimated that each participant would have 3 spectators with them as many of them are youth participants. As Brazie is the one who runs these events she promised to be very strict about the guidelines of only one spectator per rider at the rail and to enforce the social distancing and mask wearing requirements. The Board felt the event could go on with those assurances.

Though there has been no word at Town Hall from dog users since the closing of the Dog Park, Chairman McGurn said that the users understand that the Board is serious. When asked Vice-Chairman Vermeulen explained that the dog park was closed because users violated the rules, didn't keep themselves safe, disrespected the space and left trash and waste when they are asked not to.

#### FOLLOW UPS/UPDATES:

Seven abutting property owners were contacted regarding the culvert replacement that needs to take place on Route 23/41. All were asked to report back to Town Hall whether they wanted the work to take place during 72 straight hours or over a 2 week time frame only during the day time hours. Only 2 return phone calls were received. Both parties agreed that the 72 hour option was the best and had no issue with nighttime noise. This will be reported to James Barnack, the engineer on the project.

The Town's Birthday Celebration video is being recorded later in the day. Chairman McGurn proposed that the Selectboard's segment be recorded on Thursday. It was agreed to try to do so at 10am if Nick Keene is available.

Chairman McGurn reported that a second talking session regarding School Consolidation is being held later in the day. Neither he nor Tom Berkel can attend. Chairman McGurn has been made Chair of the Operations Sub-Committee and Egremont School Committee member Marcella Bush is also

on that Committee.

With the influx of new residents, the question of when FiberConnects build out will continue has been a popular question again. It was noted that FiberConnect and MassBroadband Institute (MBI) are still negotiating and the Town recently urged MBI to move this project to a fast track. Chairman McGurn noted that the school district is very aware of the influx and the need for students to have working broadband and good equipment.

Joan Goodkind asked the Board to review the email she sent out last evening asking questions about the town's affordable housing site. The Selectboard members just got the email this morning. It will be reviewed and this will be a topic on the next meeting agenda.

SELECTBOARD ITEMS:

The Board will meet on August 18 at 10am via zoom.

Meeting adjourned at 11:41pm.

Mary Brazie,  
Office Administrator

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*The recording of the minutes is on record at the Town Hall for 90 days. Anyone who wishes to may obtain a copy or listen to the recording at Town Hall. Attachments are on file at Town Hall.*